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INNOVATIVE WORKPLACES, HISTORIC SPACES:

MODERNIZING HOUSE OFFICE BUILDINGS

Thursday, March 17, 2021

House of Representatives,

Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress,

Washington, D.C.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 9:00 a.m., in Room 210, Cannon House Office Building, Hon. Derek Kilmer [chairman of the committee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Kilmer, Cleaver, Phillips, Williams, Timmons, and Joyce.

The Chairman. The committee will come to order.

Without objection, the chair is authorized to declare a recess in the committee at any time.

And I recognize myself for 5 minutes for an opening statement.

On average, Americans spend one-third of their lives working. That is 90,000 hours over the course of a lifetime. For workers who work multiple jobs or continue to work well past the average age of retirement, those figures are significantly higher.

Time spent on the job is time away from home for most working Americans. Prior to the pandemic, 82 percent of employees did some or all of their work at an actual place of work. COVID, of course, has changed all of that. Telework moved into the mainstream, and millions of Americans quickly transformed their living rooms, dining rooms, and even their bedrooms into their home offices.

Two years later, it appears we are finally turning the corner, and many American workers are now transitioning back to the office. That transition, however, isn't as easy as flipping a switch. Some workers learned that they could do their jobs just as well, if not better, from home. Others appreciated the flexibility of telework and time saved not commuting.

And, at the same time, many workers missed the office environment. Spontaneous opportunities to collaborate, brainstorm, or even just socialize with colleagues all but disappeared during the pandemic. For every worker who wants to continue working from home, there is one who wants to be in the office and yet another who wants a hybrid schedule.

Employers across the country are now recognizing that, in order to recruit and retain top talent, their workplaces need to be reflective and supportive of how their

employees want to work.

The pandemic jump-started a massive workplace makeover that was already underway, thanks to factors like changing worker demographics and new technologies. Research shows that high-quality workplace design improves employee productivity and efficiency. It also boosts employee job satisfaction, which is key to staff retention.

Research also shows that smart design doesn't have to cost a lot and small investments up front can result in big long-term savings. For example, flexible rather than fixed design can make it easier for offices to continually adapt and provide the multi-use workspaces that employees want.

These trends present a real opportunity for Congress to think about how to design and use space in ways that not only accommodates Members and staff but the people we serve.

We face a multitude of pain points in how our office buildings are designed and function. Among other things, there is little to no drop-in meeting space, other than the overly noisy cafeterias or Dunkin' Donuts. The room reservation system could use some major improvements so that we can trust that a space will actually be available when we book it. Members, staff, and guests routinely get lost while navigating this complex, particularly for those of us in the Rayburn building. I have not found my office at times.

To learn ways to address these problems, we will be joined today by two panels of witnesses to discuss innovative design principles and strategies that Congress might consider.

First, we will hear from J. Brett Blanton, the Architect of the Capitol. Mr. Blanton will discuss his office's Vision 2100 plan that serves as the guiding vision for what the congressional complex will look like 80 years from now. He will also discuss current physical space modernization efforts and provide a brief update on the implementation

status of the committee's previous recommendations that fall under his jurisdiction.

Our second panel of witnesses will consist of outside experts that will talk with us about best practices in architecture, interior design, and way-finding systems that might be applicable to our campus.

The committee will once again make use of the committee rules we adopted earlier this year that give us the flexibility to engage in thoughtful discussion and the civil exchange of opinion. In accordance with clause 2(j) of House rule XI, we will allow up to 30 minutes of extended questioning per witness. And, without objection, time will not be strictly segregated between the witnesses, which will allow for extended back-and-forth exchanges between members and the witness.

Vice Chair Timmons and I will manage the time to ensure that every member has equal opportunity to participate. Any member who wishes to speak should signal their request to me or Vice Chair Timmons. Additionally, members who wish to claim their individual 5 minutes to question each witness pursuant to clause 2(j)(2) of rule XI will be permitted to do so following the period of extended questioning.

Okay. That was a lot.

Now let me kick it over to Vice Chair Timmons to share some opening remarks.

[The statement of the chairman follows:]

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Mr. Timmons. Good morning. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First, I want to thank my friend Dean Phillips and Rodney Davis for their efforts as it relates to this hearing. I am passionate about it as well, but they have been spearheading the conversation, so I just want to say thank you.

In that vein, Congressman Davis is not going to be able to be here, so I have some remarks that he wanted to share, and I ask unanimous consent that they be included for the record.

Thank you.

[The statement of Mr. Davis follows:]

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Mr. Timmons. And when Dave Joyce gets here, it is his --

The Chairman. His birthday.

Mr. Timmons. -- birthday, so we are going to have to give him a --

The Chairman. Should we break into song upon his arrival?

Mr. Timmons. I think so. I think -- we can do that. Okay.

The Chairman. Witnesses have to participate.

Mr. Timmons. Well, first, Mr. Blanton, thank you so much for coming. We are going to have a lot of fun today.

I really -- I love this complex. I love the Capitol. I cannot imagine how challenging it is to manage all the variables. If you think about it, you have Members and their staff needs; you have ingress/egress out of the Capitol; you have security concerns; you have visitors. And then you have the physical structures being on a hill going down and the challenges associated with how you get between buildings and how you define what floor is what and how.

And I cannot tell you how many times I have gotten lost in Rayburn. I try not to go there, but, unfortunately, that is where my committee is. But, trying to get to the chairman's office, I have literally never gone the fastest way. I know that I have never gone the fastest way.

The Chairman. Oof.

Mr. Timmons. And, to be fair, our offices, I think, are the two furthest points on the entire House campus from one another. I mean, they literally are.

I am not going to say that we -- I know that we can do better. I don't know what that means, and I think that is the purpose of this hearing.

I think the best ways that we can try to improve is going to be opportunities for

Members to interact in a bipartisan manner. We have made some recommendations on that already, but I think a lot of it is space. We have had so many challenges, as a committee, just trying to find places to have fellowship and to have meetings. And, you know, it is not so much being a select committee but just a dinner. We have literally struck out many times trying to find a place to have dinner on the complex. We have gotten better at it, but it is not easy.

And then you have staff. You know, if staff wants to get together, really, they can go to ABP -- that is their neutral site -- or a number of other spots -- Dunkin' Donuts. I would like to really explore what we can do to create some collaborative spaces both for Members and for staff.

And, you know, I am really looking forward to your thoughts and to Dean's thoughts and to everybody else's thoughts on how we can tackle that.

So I just really appreciate that we are having this hearing today. I am looking forward to the recommendations we can come up with.

And, with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

[The statement of Mr. Timmons follows:]

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The Chairman. Thank you, Vice Chair Timmons.

Before we hear from our witnesses, I want to just take a moment and acknowledge the work of two of our committee member, Mr. Davis and Mr. Phillips, who have taken the lead on working on this issue for the committee. I would like to thank both of them and their staffs for working so hard to help us put this hearing together, for helping us scope the themes that we are going to cover and finding today's witnesses.

So, before we move on, I would like to give you a chance to talk about your interest and work on the physical space issues. So, Mr. Phillips, I would welcome you to share any remarks.

Mr. Phillips. Thank you, Mr. Chair, to you; to Vice Chair Timmons; to you, Mr. Blanton -- welcome -- to the extraordinary staff that have brought us on this journey of modernization.

And I also want to salute Patrick Wand, who is going to be on the second panel, from my district, a little shopping center in Bloomington, Minnesota, called the Mall of America, who is going to talk about how to get to Rayburn a little bit faster.

I think this is the most collaborative committee in the entire Congress, and it is by design, thanks to you, Chair Kilmer, and you, Vice Chair Timmons. And, as a result, we believe that space, when employed well, when thoughtfully designed, can both force collaboration, innovation, and better outcomes. Conversely, when poorly designed, poorly utilized, it impedes those very outcomes.

And we see a grand opportunity to preserve and protect these extraordinary facilities but also bring them into the 21st century so that those who visit us, those who work with us, and those who serve as Members of Congress will be forced by design to work more closely together. That is our inspiration, and that is our aspiration.



So I am thrilled particularly to be part of this hearing. Rodney Davis, who serves on House Admin, has been a great partner in this. And we believe that the United States Congress should reflect the very best in not just American design but world design as it relates to space and also places for collaboration.

So, with that, thank you for a few moments just to speak, Chair Kilmer, and I am excited for this hearing.

[The statement of Mr. Phillips follows:]

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The Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Phillips.

I am honored to welcome four experts who are here to share with us their ideas and recommendations for how Congress can improve and modernize its buildings and offices.

Witnesses are reminded that your written statements will be made part of the record.

Our first witness is J. Brett Blanton. Mr. Blanton has served as the Architect of the Capitol since 2020. Previously, he served as the deputy vice president of the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority.

Mr. Blanton served as a U.S. Naval officer for more than 20 years in both the U.S. and overseas. He was awarded the Bronze Star for combat heroism in Baghdad.

He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in aeronautical engineering from the United States Naval Academy and a Master of Science degree in ocean engineering from Virginia Tech.

Mr. Blanton, you are now recognized for 5 minutes.

**STATEMENT OF J. BRETT BLANTON, ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL**

Mr. Blanton. Thank you, Chair Kilmer, Vice Chair Timmons, and members of the committee. I appreciate the opportunity to testify today, and I truly appreciate the committee's work. I am a firm believer that we can achieve great success if we all work together.

As the 12th Architect of the Capitol, I would like to share my observations from my first few years while serving Congress and the Supreme Court.

Above all else, the U.S. Capitol is a symbol of Western democracy. It is one of the most significant architectural buildings in the entire world. Building upon this rich history, our current scope of work is much more than the early Architects could have ever imagined. Day and night, AOC employees and staff work behind the scenes to ensure Congress and the Supreme Court can function. It is a very unique environment. And I can say we are committed to preserving the history of this institution as well as adapting it to address modern functionality.

As discussed in my written testimony, AOC's Vision 2100 provides a North Star or guideposts and principles to adapt the Capitol complex to prepare for innovations over the next 80 years. It reflects input from Members of Congress, congressional staff, stakeholders, and anybody who views the Capitol as a symbol of American democracy.

At the same time, we need to complete a comprehensive master plan so that we can memorialize how to preserve and modernize the Capitol complex over the next 20 years.

The last 2 years have brought unprecedented challenges but enabled AOC to adapt our mission to better serve Congress and the Supreme Court.

For example, physical security is paramount and is of great importance to anybody who enters the Capitol complex, and physical security infrastructure improvements have been a top priority of the AOC throughout my tenure. In close and continuous coordination with my counterparts in the Capitol Police and the House and Senate Sergeants at Arms, we have put significant effort in adapting our infrastructure to meet ever-changing security needs.

From the start of the pandemic, AOC took the lead for the legislative branch to act as a general purchasing agent for PPE, manage specialized cleaning of spaces identified by our partners and assessed by the Office of the Attending Physician, and ensure the facilities and utilities are well-maintained for ongoing and future congressional needs.

Throughout all these measures and ongoing coordination with our partners, we are working to make the Capitol complex a safe environment for employees and visitors.

Yet all employees across America are now looking at how we may adjust our operations when we welcome back more staff and visitors. AOC is now doing its own spatialization assessment for our office space used by AOC employees in the Ford Building.

Throughout this effort, we are defining the office of the future. Realizing the success of telework over the past 2 years and utilizing activity-based planning, I am encouraging the use of shared desk space, or hoteling; shared parking; smaller huddle rooms for ad-hoc meetings; and adjustable partitions for conference rooms to accommodate a variety of uses.

As resources permit, the AOC also plans to launch an initiative that will utilize technology and ISO standards to enhance our efficiency and operations. A new enterprise asset management system will aid in decisionmaking for operating and maintaining infrastructure assets, such as buildings, machinery, vehicles, and construction

equipment. These efforts also reflect my ongoing commitment to have consistent standards and policies and procedures across campus.

For visitors, we have made great strides in terms of signage for those arriving at different parts of the campus. At the same time, I continue to look forward to ways to improve way-finding, and I acknowledge that many of our buildings, by just the layout of the infrastructure, are challenging to navigate.

In addition, the agency is committed to improving accessibility across campus. We have established a new office within AOC to oversee safety and code compliance. This office, with support of our partners at the Sergeants at Arms and the Office of Congressional Workplace Rights, will help ensure the accessibility recommendations made by this committee are enacted.

AOC is proactively taking necessary steps to improve accessibility. For example, we are actively incorporating accessibility requirements into new projects, conducting accessibility surveys and inspections of completed projects, examining existing facilities for ADA compliance, providing ADA training for AOC staff, and addressing the Office of Congressional Workplace Rights' reports on the Americans with Disabilities Act.

In addition, the Cannon Renewal Project incorporates many accessibility improvements within this historic building. As discussed in my written testimony, we have addressed very specific needs centering around access to Members' offices and committee hearing rooms. We have also expanded the number of elevators and family-friendly restrooms as part of this effort.

And while all these improvements are a top priority, I am also committed to maintaining a positive work environment where people have the skills, training, equipment, and support to serve Congress on behalf of the American people. On a daily basis, I am impressed and inspired by the perseverance and professionalism displayed by

my employees.

Yet we can always do better to provide training opportunities for my staff. That is why I started an initiative called AOC University. Through this effort, we are expanding professional development opportunities for all AOC employees. We have a team working to identify the areas of greatest training needs as well as the best format for implementation. Our goal is to provide cost-effective, meaningful opportunities to both attract and retain skilled employees. In doing so, we will provide greater incentives and opportunities for our workforce.

With support of Congress and the incredibly talented and skillful team, I am proud of what we have accomplished as well as what the future holds for the Capitol complex. On behalf the AOC staff, I thank you for your support and look forward to answering your questions.

[The statement of Mr. Blanton follows:]

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The Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Blanton.

I now recognize myself and Vice Chair Timmons to begin a period of extended questioning of the witness. Any member who wishes to speak should just signal their request to either myself or to Vice Chair Timmons.

I have a thousand questions for you, but I am going to try to keep it to three. And the three I have relate to recommendations this committee has made previously and just trying to get a sense of the capacity to actually do some of these things. So let me hit on a few of these.

I am going to start with, like, where we are right now. The setup that we have on this committee is a little bit unique. We have sort of decided that it is hard to have a good conversation staring at the back of somebody's head, and so our committee has decided to kind of sit in this sort of format, at least whenever possible.

One of our recommendations that we made in the last Congress was to empower committees to experiment with this type of a layout. That is a little challenging based on the committee rooms all kind of look like this, and there is not a lot of, sort of, mobility of the furniture. We have daises.

So I guess the question is, is there a space where -- you know, I am thinking about, like, the Cannon Caucus Room or something like that -- that could be used by committees if they wanted to do something like this, committees or subcommittees, if they wanted to have more of a roundtable format? Or could we make sure that the big rooms in the House Visitor Center could be accessible for C-SPAN so that committees could meet in that type of format?

Mr. Blanton. That is a great question. As we all know, space is a challenge, and even scheduling a space seems to be more of a challenge.

The Chairman. Yeah.

Mr. Blanton. And it is a challenge for anybody on the Capitol complex.

I welcome the idea of having -- well, a meeting like this is much more conducive to conversation. And it is more of what you would see in a boardroom-type meeting, where you have the ability to interact and dialogue, as opposed to different elevation of individuals, talking down at some people, talking across at other people.

The Chairman. Yeah.

Mr. Blanton. So the CVC holds a unique opportunity, on both the House and the Senate side, where we can configure the rooms to host meetings similar to this. I will say, this is almost the identical layout that we use in the CVC rooms for the Capitol Police Board meetings, which are very productive.

Right now, the challenge, from my understanding, is the electronics, the backbone. But that can be resolved. It just needs to be a priority, where we can make sure that the cameras are there, that the lighting is proper to host public meetings. You know, it is perfectly fine for private meetings. There are challenges of connection with, whether it is a -- whatever web server event is being used to broadcast. And those are all things that could become a priority for Congress that can be implemented.

I also want to say that one of the challenges -- and it is somewhat consistent across many of the recommendations of this committee -- is, there are numerous stakeholders that are involved. There isn't one person that you can actually pin the rose on and say, "I would like you to do this." It involves coordination between my office, the House Sergeant at Arms, CAO. And so all of us would need to work together. And we all have different budgets that would have to pay for part of these.

And so I would say in any recommendation -- I have great partnerships with them, and I think they would say the same thing about us. But with any recommendation we



have to realize that we have these various stakeholders who will have a say in how the outcome would be accomplished.

The Chairman. That is useful. But for what it is worth, the omnibus that we just passed includes a modernization account within the leg. branch section. That might provide the flexibility to do so. You know, given the siloing that you mentioned, that might be an opportunity.

One of the other recommendations that we made was focused on raising the cap on the number of full-time staff, just recognizing that our districts are getting bigger and bigger, the population that we serve is getting larger and larger, and the capacity to be responsive to our constituents becomes more challenging.

There was some independent review of this that also suggested that there should be an increased number of employees on the Hill.

Can we accommodate that? You know, do we have available options for if we are bringing more people in to Member offices? How would that work?

Mr. Blanton. If Congress and the staff, the Member staff, are going to operate the way it has prior to COVID, then the short answer is there is not available space.

However, if you look at it from a hybrid perspective -- and I can say my office is going to that. Obviously I have staff that have to be on campus. It is hard to do maintenance to facilities if you are not here. But I have staff that support that don't necessarily have to be on campus. And so we are adopting a hybrid approach for my staff. There, there are opportunities where we can capture space that could be utilized to bring more people in.

I will also say that --

The Chairman. Is anybody doing that other than your office? I mean, are there these, sort of, flexible workspaces?

Mr. Blanton. So we did a project at the Thurgood Marshall Building which is really the prototype for us of the office of the future, where we renovated a space on their first floor to allow for hoteling.

We put the lockers in for people to have their privacy areas, and they would share a desk. We converted conference rooms in ways that they could have many small meetings or one large one, and then even sliding partitions so if we needed to have an all-persons meeting, an all-agency meeting, that you can have that hosted in the conference room but yet then steal off into the areas where the partitions are.

The Chairman. Are you looking at doing that in any of these office buildings?

Mr. Blanton. So that will take the -- it is under the authority of the House Office Building Commission. And what we hope to do with our office of the future is really show this as an example of what can be accomplished so that there is a demand for this in our office buildings.

Because I will say, one of the things that we heard in our interviews with Vision 2100 is the need for small huddle rooms, is the need for just a space where I could go on and have a teleconference with, whether it is a constituent or somebody -- we are working on the same issue; we just don't happen to be in the same location. But that doesn't exist.

The Chairman. Yeah.

Mr. Blanton. And that is something that we really want to highlight to say that, you know, this is what can occur, so that we can get the various partners who have a stake in it all coming together and saying that, yes, we want this to occur.

The Chairman. I am going to put a pin in my other 998 questions.

So go ahead, please.

Mr. Timmons. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a bunch of my own questions,

but I am going to start with Congressman Davis's questions, because they are a little bit more polished.

Thank you for presenting on Vision 2100. It is clear that the plan has many long-term goals, but I am curious if your team has broken the plan into smaller timelines -- for example, a 5-year, 10-year, and 20-year version?

Mr. Blanton. Yes. Thank you.

So it is a nestle plan. So the Vision 2100 is, as I said, it is the powerful and lasting statement of what the Capitol will be over the next 80 years. Then you have our Capitol Complex Master Plan, which looks at that 80 years over four 20-year increments. The next portion under that is four 5-year strategic plans.

And so that is how they all nestle together to work. But the idea is we are following the North Star from the vision and we are having definitive things where we have specific timelines where we can measure our progress and determine, do we need to change courses.

Mr. Timmons. It would be beneficial as followup for us to learn about these shorter-term plans and how your team has built in room for innovation. Is that something your office could provide?

Mr. Blanton. We would welcome that discussion.

Mr. Timmons. Okay. Great. Thank you.

And what customer feedback tools do you have in place to ensure that the people who use and visit these buildings are part of the process?

Mr. Blanton. So we have customer feedback for every single trouble call that we do, so in every single office, where we are trying to mirror ourselves very similar to what Amazon does when they deliver a package. I mean, it starts with a simple question, are you happy or not happy. And then if you are happy, we have a couple of questions that

follow on about, you know, they were timely, they were courteous, they got the work done. If you are not happy, there are some follow-on questions.

We also have that when we have the public in there that will engage with the Capitol Visitor Center, along their tour routes.

Mr. Timmons. Do you believe that the House needs another House office building?

Mr. Blanton. I think that is something that we are clearly looking at as part of our Capitol Complex Master Plan. There is a distinct pressure on both the House and the Senate for office space, and so, obviously, land is a premium on both sides. And so that is something we are -- that is one of the key outcomes of our master plan.

And I want to state that this is not a master plan that AOC is doing in private and then going to unveil it and say, here is the answer. This is an interactive process with Members and stakeholders and the public, effectively, to determine what is best for us and for the next 20 years.

Mr. Timmons. Last question. What do you believe is the House office buildings' greatest challenge when it comes to space?

Mr. Blanton. Configuration, more than anything else. The space was designed -- I mean, the earliest building was designed in the, you know, turn of the 19th century and constructed in the beginning of the 20th century. The concept of even telephones didn't exist at that time.

And so you think what has progressed in the world, what technology disrupters have progressed since then. It is really adapting the space to be able to utilize current technology in the most efficient way possible.

Mr. Timmons. I am going to let Dean go. I will have my questions next.  
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Phillips. My first question is understanding how space is currently used. Does the AOC maintain an understanding of exactly who controls each room, hearing room, office, and so forth? Is there a centralized understanding of that right now?

Mr. Blanton. So we have a good understanding of under whose authority each room is given, whether it is -- I mean, the overarching authority is the House Office Building Commission.

Mr. Phillips. And just for everybody's education, who comprises that commission?

Mr. Blanton. So that is the Speaker, the majority leader, and the majority and minority on CHA.

Mr. Phillips. Okay. And so they maintain a -- I guess, ultimately, the answer is, there is some type of a master --

Mr. Blanton. Yes. They do it in large blocks.

Mr. Phillips. Okay.

Mr. Blanton. For example, they will say, "AOC, you have this floor on the Ford building," and then we are now in charge of configuring our space on that building.

Mr. Phillips. Okay.

Mr. Blanton. And they will give CHA or another support entity another set of real estate that they would control.

Mr. Phillips. Okay.

Mr. Blanton. We have not had discussions about really looking at the micro level, outside of my spaces, of how can we reconfigure some of these office spaces in a way that would be more efficient.

Mr. Phillips. Okay. So different groups administer different spaces. Same goes with scheduling, I imagine?

Mr. Blanton. Yes.

Mr. Phillips. Okay.

Mr. Blanton. Like, I have conference rooms that I can schedule. The various support entities have the same.

Mr. Phillips. Okay.

And just tagging along on Chair Kilmer's question about committee room design, whose instruction would it take -- if the aspiration was to reconfigure this hearing room, for example, and do a more collaborative environment, whose instruction would result in that being done?

Mr. Blanton. So we have a program within the House that we are doing two committee rooms a year. And that is in close consultation with CHA about what committee rooms are in the queue and what we are doing within the committee rooms.

Mr. Phillips. Okay.

Mr. Blanton. So we go through and we -- for example, some of these committee rooms, they will change the entire orientation, where the dais is now 90 degrees at what it was before because it would --

Mr. Phillips. Interesting.

Mr. Blanton. -- allow greater operations.

We do engage with the committee and CHA during that process to determine what would be best for the renovation, best for the operations of the committee, fully realizing that what was the past -- we have a history -- sorry -- we have a mission to preserve, but, also, there is a way that you can preserve while still modernizing.

Mr. Phillips. So, if I might just interject, so if a committee chair in a -- first of all, which hearing rooms are up next?

Mr. Blanton. I will have to take that for the record.

Mr. Phillips. Okay.

So, if a committee chair implored that we want to get away from this design and do a more circular table, is that something -- who would stand in the way of that, if a committee chair said this is how we want to do it, or --

Mr. Blanton. It would be in consultation with my office and CHA. They would have these discussions.

Mr. Phillips. You would have to collaborate. So there is not a distinct -- okay. Okay.

Mr. Blanton. Each one of these committee rooms have a level of historic preservation that is required based off the history of the committee. Some of them are not as historic as other committee rooms, so that makes it much easier to be able to go through and say, hey, we can change just about everything.

Mr. Phillips. But is that fair to say, well, that is the chandeliers and the finishes and the -- I mean, less than the configuration of the --

Mr. Blanton. It is mostly the physical infrastructure, but you can run into it with some of the historic daises.

Mr. Phillips. Okay.

Mr. Blanton. They may have hosted very particular events in the past.

Mr. Phillips. Okay.

My second question is about any engagement of the private sector -- designers, thinkers -- for, kind of, ideation as you work on some of these master plans, the 2100 plan?

Mr. Blanton. Yes. So we don't do anything in AOC in a bubble. All of our designs -- our planning, designs, and construction, we hire consultants. And we have some of the greatest consultants when it comes to historic infrastructure preservation

and also modernization that you can get in the United States.

And I will use Cannon as a great example where we worked wonders to get that old building to the way that the current suites are renovated. Now, I will say, though, that those suites were renovated based off of how operations were at the time. And if operations are changing, that gives us an opportunity to re-look at those for other buildings.

Mr. Phillips. And you don't have to name names, but have you engaged at all with some of America's top employers that are kind of forward-thinking in terms of their design facilities?

Mr. Blanton. Yes, we did, as part of Vision 2100. We engaged with some of the largest and most innovative corporations that --

Mr. Phillips. Great.

Mr. Blanton. You could probably list them. I can list them on my hand. But, you know, we engaged with them. And I can provide you more information about that.

Mr. Phillips. Well, if you can name names, that would be great, but I respect it if you can't.

Mr. Blanton. I would prefer not to in this setting.

Mr. Phillips. I understand.

Mr. Blanton. Because many of them wanted to keep their interaction confidential because they --

Mr. Phillips. I understand.

Mr. Blanton. But I will say, we also brought in futurists --

Mr. Phillips. Great.

Mr. Blanton. -- and visionaries to really look at -- technology is changing more rapidly and is expected to change more rapidly in the future than it did just in the last



20 years. And so there are a lot of disrupters, or, as we called them, change tensions.

And I will just use a very small example with us. The micro transportation networks that are going on now, the bikes and scooters. If you would have told me a couple years ago that somebody would be riding a scooter on the Capitol complex, I would have said, yeah, a 12-year-old would, not a businessperson going to work.

Mr. Phillips. Uh-huh.

Mr. Blanton. So that is a change tension, but I wouldn't necessarily call that one what we would call a fundamental shift. A fundamental shift is where that tension now turns to changing the way we do business.

And I am going to talk philosophical now. Because Uber and Lyft are doing research on flying vehicles, flying taxis. We have controlled airspace around the Capitol. My guess is, the first time that leadership wants to have a flying taxi pick them up, we are going to change that. And so we are going to have to be able to adapt the Capitol to, where they are going to land? How are they going to get picked up? How structurally can we support that?

And so, as part of the Vision and our master plan, we want to make sure those tensions, as we see them predictive to them becoming fundamental shifts in the way we do business, that we are able to adapt to that.

Mr. Phillips. Can I just clarify -- before I turn it back, can I just clarify your answer to my first question about who ultimately makes decisions on redesigning space? You say it is a collaboration between the AOC in conjunction with committee --

Mr. Blanton. CHA and the committee.

Mr. Phillips. CHA. Okay.

Mr. Blanton. Yes.

So the next up for renovation, just for the record, it is Oversight, Foreign Affairs,

Agriculture, and then CHA.

Mr. Phillips. Okay. So Foreign Affairs, Ag, and CHA.

Mr. Blanton. CHA.

Mr. Phillips. Okay. Thank you.

The Chairman. Go ahead, Mr. Timmons.

Mr. Timmons. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We have talked a lot about trying to find opportunities for Members to have fellowship. I imagine kind of a cafe-style thing somewhere near the Capitol, maybe inside, maybe outside. Just really bipartisan eating space, both for casual meetings but also for dinners. How challenging would that be?

And let me give you one more variable. Before the pandemic, I think there was talk of putting the restaurant next to the Members Dining Room on OpenTable when we are not here. Like, their food service is pretty good, but, you know, it is very challenging when I think one of their rooms had \$20,000 in annual income, and, I mean, it is just hard to run a restaurant when the flow is so unpredictable.

Is there any talk of anything with the restaurant? And then, separate from that, the meeting space for Members, cafe-style and dinners.

Mr. Blanton. So, for the restaurants on the House side, that is managed by CAO. We do the restaurants on the Senate side.

I will say, we are both experiencing the same issues when it comes to the revenue generation that you would expect from a restaurant. As you know, we go through times where they need to be open late at night because of business, to August recess when they may get a tenth of the people that will travel and utilize the restaurant.

I will say that, on the House side, that Sodexo, who does the contract, they have done a pretty good job. And I will compliment them and CAO for the work they have

done to keep the restaurants open to meet the demand.

As far as your question about meeting space, one of the things that we are looking at in our master plan is the concept of, is there a need on the Capitol complex for, for lack of a better word, a conference center? Something that you can have not necessarily meetings in the buildings anymore -- because we still don't know what the security procedures will be for each one of the buildings -- but is there an outside space where we can have a conference center of various sizes where you could have these type of meetings and get the public engaged more and, frankly, rent them out for catered meals.

Mr. Timmons. So we have, I guess I would call it a pop-up coffee shop in the bottom of Cannon. Is that something that we are going to see repeated, or is that just a one-time trial run? It is in the middle of the hallway, kind of weird. What is the plan there long term?

Mr. Blanton. I would have to defer to CHA.

Mr. Timmons. Okay.

Mr. Blanton. They manage that for the House.

Mr. Timmons. Okay.

Who would have to make the decision if we wanted to have a kind of indoor/outdoor cafe-style meetings space for Members to facilitate, kind of, bipartisanship opportunities? Who makes that call? Is it the Speaker?

Mr. Blanton. So, as part of the master plan, we would recommend it, and the decision would be the House Office Building Commission. Then, obviously, the appropriators are going to have a large say in how it is funded for execution of the work.

Mr. Timmons. Is there a master list, survey, of, I will call it, flex space? So I am down the hall in Cannon, and Speaker Pelosi's old office has this massive conference table that I have never seen anybody use. I mean, space like that, I mean, I would imagine

someone is responsible for it. Is it reservable? How does that stuff work?

Mr. Blanton. So it depends on where the space has been allocated. And this is one of the challenges we have on, really, both sides of campus, in the House and the Senate, is there are several entities that have approval authority. In general, it is, the House Office Building Commission has whole visibility of the space that is used by Members and the committees.

The space that is allocated to various support entities, like my office, CHA, and the Sergeant at Arms, they have broad visibility but not the same visibility. Where, for example, if you needed to use a conference -- your staff needed to use a conference room of mine in the Ford, it would take somebody knowing it exists, knowing that nobody is in it right now, knowing who to talk to in my organization to be able to rent it -- or use it.

There isn't currently anything that looks at conference rooms or flex spaces that has an online, say, reservation system that would be able to prioritize a meeting of, say, the chairs versus the vice chairs or another committee meeting. And I can tell you, in many commercial office spaces, that exists. You can go on your computer, whether it is through Outlook or some homegrown system, and say, I want to, you know, utilize a conference room from 2:00 to 3:00.

Mr. Timmons. I think that is something we can probably look into further.

The pendulum always swings back and forth on the Hill, and the Speaker inevitably will change and change back. Does the Speaker have the vast majority of control over, kind of, the Capitol and flex space? And is there any possibility of maybe recommending a standing space that is not party-controlled that would be available for anyone that wants to get together and have fellowship in a bipartisan manner? Does that question make sense?

Mr. Blanton. So I wouldn't say the Speaker has control. I would say it is the House Office Building Commission has control. And so that --

Mr. Timmons. Which is the Speaker, the majority leader, and --

Mr. Blanton. And CHA.

Mr. Timmons. Okay.

Mr. Blanton. But that is the organization that would be able to make a decision of, space that is utilized by Members and committees, that this could be utilized for a different purpose.

Mr. Timmons. Last question. Historically, has this -- I mean, 10 years ago, 20 years ago, was there more opportunity for -- was there more space that was available to Members generally, or has this always been a problem?

Mr. Blanton. From my understanding -- I mean, obviously, offices are growing, support entities are growing. But my understanding is that for at least over a decade space has been a challenge on the Capitol complex as a whole.

Mr. Timmons. Thank you.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman. Mr. Cleaver.

Mr. Cleaver. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me first thank Dean Phillips for requesting this kind of hearing and our two leaders for putting it on.

I had a chance to spend some time going through the bunker where Churchill always went during the bombing of London. And I have to tell you that I think about the January 6th assault on the Capitol quite a bit, and I just wonder whether or not it makes sense or whether it is architecturally possible for each of the three House buildings to have some kind of place that would bring a higher level of security than our offices.

You know, when the Capitol invasion -- whatever word we want to use -- took place, we all were told to shelter in place, and most of us did it. But even I have a -- and after being here for a while and getting threats and so forth, I created a safe room in my house for my wife, because I am gone; nobody else is there. But there is nothing up here that I am aware of, at least on the House side, that would offer a higher level of security should something happen again. I hope it never happens again.

But can you speak to that impossibility -- the craziness of the thought or the possibility that it could be done?

Mr. Blanton. Yes. Thank you for the question.

Immediately following the events of January 6th, we requested that appropriators transfer money from one of my accounts to another account in order to do a comprehensive physical security assessment.

The assessment has been completed, and I would welcome an opportunity to provide you a brief on it. Unfortunately, the assessment is classified. I will say, however, your concerns that you discussed, dealing with safe rooms, are a major consideration as part of that assessment.

I will also say, there has been work that has been done on the Capitol complex, specifically in the area of the House Chamber, where we have hardened the facility. And my hope is you never notice that the work was done, because it looks the same as it did before. Specifically, if you look in the Speaker's Lobby, there have been changes there.

And the idea of doing any physical security improvement, it is a balance. And it is a balance between the historical architecture but with the need for physical safety. My artisans that do that type of work are incredible at blending in the physical security aspects into the historic architecture.

And, just to reiterate, I welcome a follow-on discussion with you so that we can discuss the bounds and tenets of the physical security assessment. And I will say, in our 2023 budget submission is where you will see the first downpayment of that for the congressional campus.

Mr. Cleaver. Thank you very much.

Let me just ask our two leaders, Mr. Timmons and Mr. Kilmer, to request some kind of a meeting -- I don't know if we would need to go into a SCIF or whether we could have the meeting some other places -- and receive some kind of a briefing on this. I think it would be very helpful to us -- to me and, I think, to everyone.

So, if that is possible, I would request it, and understand that we all have -- you know, I am on Homeland Security, so we do go into the SCIF to see classified information that we understand is not to be shared outside of that SCIF.

The Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Cleaver.

And we would love to follow up with you in terms of getting more information.

Mr. Blanton. Great. I welcome that discussion, and I will have my staff work with your staff to schedule in a SCIF.

The Chairman. Terrific.

Mr. Cleaver. Thank you very kindly.

The Chairman. Let me just ask if any of the other members of the committee have any other -- go ahead.

Mr. Phillips. Mr. Blanton, it seems a little bit more complicated to completely redo a committee room or reimagine space, but, in the interim, who makes decisions about the furniture choices that are available to Members of Congress in rooms like this?

Mr. Blanton. CHA does furnishings.

Mr. Phillips. Okay. So that is solely their -- so CHA can say, we are going

change how the chairs are here, and that is done?

Mr. Blanton. I can't talk about their process, but my assumption --

Mr. Phillips. Uh-huh. But they issue the mandates?

Mr. Blanton. -- just knowing her, that it would be where she would coordinate with whomever.

Mr. Phillips. Okay.

As far as you are aware, has there been any discussion about perhaps expanding the array of furnishings available to Members and rooms from, kind of, the very heavy, traditional leather and wood to a little bit more, perhaps, 21st-century?

Mr. Blanton. I can say I personally have not had a conversation with them about that.

Mr. Phillips. Okay.

Mr. Blanton. But that is one of the entities we are looking at in our office of the future to showcase it.

Mr. Phillips. Okay. So it starts at CHA. Okay.

Thank you.

Mr. Blanton. CAO. Sorry.

Mr. Phillips. Oh, CAO. Okay.

Mr. Blanton. CAO.

Mr. Phillips. Okay.

Thank you.

The Chairman. Terrific.

Thank you for taking the time with us. Appreciate your testimony and your insights and the work you do.

Mr. Blanton. It is my pleasure. Thank you.



The Chairman. So we are going to take a moment here before moving to our second panel, if we want to move them from the on-deck circle into the batter's box.

We are joined by three experts who are here to share their ideas for modernizing physical space and way-finding on the House campus.

Witnesses are reminded that your written statements will be made part of the record.

Our first witness is Katie Irwin. Ms. Irwin is a project manager and senior associate at Quinn Evans Architects. She is a member the American Institute of Architects. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in art history and a Bachelor of Science in architecture and a Master of Architecture and a certificate in historic preservation from the University of Maryland.

And there you are. All right. So we will call on you first.

I should have read slower. Sorry.

You are recognized for 5 minutes.

**STATEMENTS OF KATIE IRWIN, ON BEHALF OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS; JAMES OSSMAN, VICE PRESIDENT, WORKPLACE AND STRATEGIC SOURCING, ETSY; AND PATRICK WAND, SENIOR MANAGER, MALL OF AMERICA**

**STATEMENT OF KATIE IRWIN**

Ms. Irwin. Good morning, Chairman Kilmer, Vice Chair Timmons, and members of the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress.

My name is Katie Irwin, and I am a licensed architect and interior designer specializing in both historic preservation and interior architecture. I am also a member of the American Institute of Architects.

AIA applauds this bipartisan select committee for including physical office space within its review of Congress's existing practices and procedures. Thank you for inviting me to participate in this important discussion today.

As an architect, I believe deeply in the power of design to support the essential functions of our society. Design best practices maximize the available office space and better equip Members of Congress and their staffs to meet the demanding requirements of their positions. Modernizing congressional offices also has staff recruitment and retention value.

I respectfully offer these recommendations for your consideration, and please see my written testimony for more detail. Please note that this is not a substitute for design consultation with an architect or a design professional and additional consultation with the Architect of the Capitol would be required.

Historic buildings, modern functionality.

In my practice, I have worked with multiple government clients in historic buildings. I fully appreciate that congressional office space must retain the grandeur we associate with the seat of American democracy. It is critical to maintain the institution's character-defining features, faces, and finishes. This is completely feasible while still allowing for necessary modernizations to meet the needs of the 21st-century office buildings.

I work with clients to identify priority zones where the historic character and public-facing aspects of the building are an elevated concern. Those are distinct from other zones that have already been modified numerous times or are reserved solely for staff use.

Congressional office suites could present a mix of both zones. A Member of Congress's office may retain solemn design and furnishing while still allowing for updates to congressional staff working spaces. Modern furnishing can support this goal. Historic writing desks and other traditional pieces can work alongside sit-to-stand desks, credenzas, and other technology-incorporative furniture. When approached thoughtfully, this can be done in a beautiful and tasteful balance of form, function, and ergonomics.

Noise and daylight.

Congress should also consider methods to reduce noise contamination and increase access to daylight. According to a 2017 report from the CBRE Group, employee performance can improve between 10 and 40 percent in offices that address light, noise, and air quality. Employees also say that they are happier and less likely to quit.

Currently, many congressional staff working spaces use 6-foot-tall cubicle partitions, which can block daylight but do not block sound. Glass partitions would allow for daylight transfer, increased transparency, and muffled sound. Congress could

also upgrade the harsher light palettes of halogen lights to warmer lighting or circadian lighting, which replicates a 24-hour cycle.

Sound-masking emits a low-level frequency that muffles sound transfer, allowing coworkers to engage in separate conversations with less interference. Additionally, sound-absorbent panels could be easily applied and removed.

Activity-based planning.

The tactics mentioned above would improve current workplace functionality, but a comprehensive strategy should include activity-based planning. This is the design concept that different areas should serve different meeting functions, connected together by updated scheduling software.

Within an individual office suite, consider layouts that include smaller, sound-controlled booths for video calls, a space for small group meetings, and another area for quiet work.

Within the Capitol complex, consider converting underused spaces to support more than one function. For example, congressional hearing rooms are impressive when in use but often sit empty. I would not recommend changing the dais where Members of Congress sit, because that ought to be considered a priority zone for preservation. However, the furnishing for the audience could be upgraded to modular design so the rows we see now can be covered to support meeting space.

Promoting effective, collaborative, and healthy workplaces on Capitol Hill supports good governance, which benefits us all. We can be good stewards of these historic spaces while sensitively integrating modern updates. AIA would welcome the opportunity to continue to be a resource for you.

Thank you again, and I look forward to your questions.

[The statement of Ms. Irwin follows:]

\*\*\*\*\* COMMITTEE INSERT \*\*\*\*\*

The Chairman. And thank you, Ms. Irwin.

Our next witness is Mr. James Ossman. Mr. Ossman is the vice president of workplace and strategic sourcing at Etsy and a First Movers Fellow at The Aspen Institute.

He earned his Bachelor of Arts in international relations and affairs from the George Washington University and earned his Master of Science in sustainability management from Columbia University.

Mr. Ossman, you are now recognized for 5 minutes.

#### **STATEMENT OF JAMES OSSMAN**

Mr. Ossman. Thank you, Chairman Kilmer and Vice Chairman Timmons and members of the committee. I am James Ossman, and I am vice president of workplace and strategic sourcing at Etsy. I am deeply honored to be here today.

A little about Etsy, if you are not already a user: Etsy is a specialized online marketplace that lets artisans and creators in the U.S. sell handmade and unique items to customers looking for something special from someone, not just anywhere.

More than 5 million creators are now selling on Etsy, mainly women and businesses of one. Our sellers live in nearly every county in the U.S., one in four in rural areas, and almost all of them work from home.

Etsy provides a true on-ramp to entrepreneurship. Anyone with 20 cents and a creative idea can start a business and pave their own path to financial success. In fact, 44 percent of Etsy sellers leaned on their creative skills and started their business during the first year of the pandemic. For them, it was a great renewal, not a resignation.

We are headquartered in Brooklyn, and we are just north of 2,400 employees.

Designing our spaces with creativity and inclusion in mind is part of our DNA. It is probably no wonder to you that a company about creativity would integrate that value deeply into our company's culture.

Etsy's offices capture the essence of our marketplace. We worked with local makers to create furniture and art that is not just inspiring but that shows off the deep connection we have with our seller community.

But our workplace philosophy is more than just about aesthetic creativity. It is also about innovating how and where we work, keeping sustainability and inclusion at the forefront.

I would like to start by talking about our underlying design and workspace principles, and then I will shift to the ways we have adapted during the pandemic.

First, sustainability. At our Brooklyn headquarters, the majority of the wood in our building was either sustainably harvested or salvaged. Some of the best lighting at Etsy is free. With an open floor plan and by placing workspaces near windows, we are able to harvest daylight and reduce energy use. We have also outfitted all of our bathrooms and kitchens with low-flow water fixtures.

Second, inclusivity. We have created multiple employee wellness areas, including a quiet green library. We have a breathing room for meditation and yoga, and we have a bike room, which encourages carbon-neutral and more healthy and planet-friendly commuting.

For new mothers and fathers who work at Etsy, we have a generous parental leave policy of 26 weeks, and when parents return to work, there are places to do all the things that new parents need to do, including lactation rooms.

We are also investing resources to go beyond basic ADA standards to make our spaces as accessible and inclusive as possible.

Third is a biophilic, or nature-oriented, design. Our open floor plan and abundant windows provide lots of natural light and great views of surrounding greenery. We have filled our rooftop and terraces with shade-tolerant grasses to create a rich green environment of soft textures, providing a tranquil and pleasant place to unwind. These are key places employees can use for private and formal meetings where sound doesn't easily transfer, as well as to socialize or gather informally.

Those three core philosophies are ironclad. But, of course, the pandemic changed everything, and, like Congress and all workplaces, we had to adapt quickly. And we learned a lot in the process.

Just months before the pandemic, Etsy was 90 percent office-based. Today, Etsy is 60 percent office-based, and we are 100 percent hybrid. That means that everything is designed for remote or in-person participation.

For Etsy, the end of the omicron wave is more than just about returning to work; it is about the future of work. We call it "How and Where We Work."

To start, we have three work modes that all employees can choose from. Flex is our default mode in which staff work from one of our offices at least 4 to 6 days per month; remote is for staff who continue to work primarily from home; and office-based is for staff who commit to working in-office at least 4 days a week.

No matter which work mode you are in, we have designed our workflows and workspaces to be fully hybrid and accessible to office and remote workers alike. This required some changes to how we use our spaces.

We have shifted from assigned seating to unassigned seating, with lockers and other storage so people have a place to drop their belongings. We know that people are mostly coming to our offices for connection and collaboration, not to sit at a desk all day as they might have done before.



We have added colorful felt screens between our desks, which allow for greater privacy and for calls to be taken from desks.

We have increased by 300 percent the quantity of informal, flexible seating and common areas. Employees can work and meet from anywhere on comfortable furnishings like couches and coffee tables, as well as more structured seating.

We have increased by 150 percent the number of large, configurable and reservable meeting spaces to support multiple types of collaboration or the need for privacy.

We also have dedicated quiet zones where anyone can work without disruption. And we have invested in norms-setting to make hybrid meetings a great experience for both in-person and remote participants.

We are very proud of our workplace approach, from our core philosophies to our transitions during the pandemic. We moved quickly but thoughtfully, with the goal of ensuring our offices enabled productivity, collaboration, and connection.

Finally, you are all welcome to come visit our Brooklyn headquarters anytime. Thank you again for the opportunity to address you today, and I welcome any questions you may have.

[The statement of Mr. Ossman follows:]

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RPTR SCHOETTLE

EDTR SECKMAN

[10:01 a.m.]

The Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Ossman.

Our final witness is Patrick Wand. Mr. Wand is the senior manager of the project management office at the Mall of America and American Dream. He has overseen the development and implementation of Mall of America's wayfinding and customer tracking system, which allows Mall of America to make better informed marketing and operational business decisions. He earned his bachelor of arts in psychology from Gustavus Adolphus College. Did I get that right?

Mr. Wand. Gustavus.

The Chairman. Norwegian background.

Mr. Wand, you are now recognized for 5 minutes.

## STATEMENT OF PATRICK WAND

Mr. Wand. Good morning, Chairman Kilmer, Vice Chair Timmons, and members of the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress. My name is Patrick Wand, and I am the senior manager of the project management office at Mall of America in Bloomington, Minnesota.

For those who have never visited Mall of America, it is the Nation's largest shopping, dining and attraction destination. Currently, we are welcoming roughly 32 million guests per year, which is 80 percent average of our historic average of 40 million annual visitors. And we have up to 500 tenants, which includes more than 60 places to dine and two dozen attractions. With more than 10,000 employees in the busiest transit hub in Minnesota, Mall of America is a welcoming place, a busy place, and it can be a challenging place to navigate.

I would like to thank the committee for inviting me to share insights we have learned at Mall of America over the past 8 years that will be relevant to your work. Myself and my colleagues have had videoconferencing meetings with your staff on the topic of wayfinding.

During our first two decades, Mall of America relied on traditional static directories placed throughout the property, much like the rest of the industry. Our journey to create a better wayfinding system began in earnest in 2014 by trying to understand and identify what our primary challenges were and which objectives and goals would be most successful. These challenges and goals are critical to understand early in the process.

We began by doing the complete analysis, holding focus groups, identifying

guests' needs, and frustrations. This included viewing wayfinding systems in other industries and in our competitors. It involved talking to key constituents and wayfinding experts. It also was accomplished by observing our guests' use of our outdated wayfinding system, talking to them, and understanding what they wanted. We listened carefully to what our guests were saying, and we did this without bias or preconceived notions.

One of our primary tools when identifying problems and solutions is to think of a process as an hourglass. Once we identified the problem that our guests were frustrated with our wayfinding, we began to look for solutions. Just like an hourglass with a wide opening at the top, we throw all of our ideas in for consideration. Nothing is off the table. This creative approach inevitably leads to a successful result.

Then, we follow those ideas through the hourglass, refining them along the way. Using this thorough process, we are able to identify the key building blocks to create a successful wayfinding solution for our guests, tenants, employees and partners. Before we could build on that solution, an elemental foundation was needed: The installation of a comprehensive WiFi system throughout our 5.6 million square-foot property. Without this critical infrastructure, we wouldn't be able to implement the solutions necessary.

With the layers of concrete, hundreds of shops and restaurants, millions of annual guests, you can imagine it was a monumental task and a significant investment. Our first step was to convince our owners to invest in this technology. To do that, we created a short video that showcased what our future could look like at Mall of America in a connected world environment. Our owners are entrepreneurs and visionaries, and they quickly understood the importance of this investment.

Our extensive WiFi installation project was completed in July of 2015, and we

were ready for the next step. Our first iteration of learning and adjusting -- our first iteration was a large screen vertical format directory in 2016, and we completely missed the mark. Customer feedback and data collected from these new directories was not positive. Rather than create a solution that worked for our guests, we went with a shiny object, and it just didn't work.

We pivoted and created what is essentially a large iPad looking screens that offer privacy to the user, as well as functionality they were comfortable with. This new system included blue-dot navigation and the directories understand the guest orientation in the mall. These new more customer-friendly wayfinding directories went live in May of 2017.

Since then, we have continued to grow the system to more than 100 digital directories that are now in place throughout Mall of America, and we continue to learn and improve this system. With millions of guests who speak languages other than English, our directories now feature the nine most frequently spoken languages in addition to English.

Our digital directories also consider accessibility and family issues. For those guests using a wheelchair, stroller or other device, it will adjust the route to the nearest elevator and show the travel time and distance. Likewise, it can help identify nearby family restrooms and nursing areas.

While our digital directories are the foundation of our wayfinding program, over the years we have created an ecosystem that assists with wayfinding from before a guest ever leaves their home, navigating the drive to Mall of America, finding convenient parking and traversing the mall.

This ecosystem includes digital guest service, help to plan your trip before leaving home, digital wayfinding signage on the freeway and highway system and the city streets

surrounding the mall, and a technology in our two massive parking ramps that show parking space availability. Once a guest exits the car, bus, or light rail train, there is ample, easy-to-understand digital and static directional signage helping them navigate mall entrances.

Once inside, digital directories, guest service personnel, static signage, our app, and social media platforms help create a seamless experience. All the steps that I shared about our wayfinding journey help illustrate that it is just not about which tool is best for the solution. To be successful, it is important to understand the entire roadmap before beginning the journey.

One final note of advice from our team, don't bite off more than you can chew. Take one step at a time, and never forget to celebrate your wins along the way. Thank so much for the opportunity to testify before you today. I welcome any questions you may have.

[The statement of Mr. Wand follows:]

\*\*\*\*\* COMMITTEE INSERT \*\*\*\*\*

The Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Wand.

I now recognize myself and Vice Chair Timmons to begin a period of extended questioning of the witnesses. Any member who wishes to speak should signal their request to either Vice Chair Timmons or myself.

Let's start with Mr. Phillips.

Mr. Phillips. My first question is for all of you. You have had a chance to walk around and peruse our environments. You came to my office yesterday, and I know you visited others. Respectably, what has been your biggest surprise based on what you've seen? Positive? Negative?

Yes. Ms. Irwin.

Ms. Irwin. I found that the offices have so many people doing so many functions all at once. So I think the earlier conversation about office space is critical. Finding those other opportunities outside of the buildings is critical. Having the activity-based planning is critical. But also needing to balance that with things that Mr. Ossman was talking about, things that are biophilic and things that bring wellness and wellbeing.

I didn't see those types of approaches to the workspace. You know, things are noisy. There is a lack of thermal comfort, control of that. There aren't -- few trees and greenery and vegetation. I think some of the courtyard will eventually get that. But those are wonderful places to have those impromptu meetings, have those collaborative bipartisan discussions in a space that is open to everyone.

Mr. Phillips. Thank you.

Mr. Ossman?

Mr. Ossman. I think the most surprising thing for me is the degree to which your space is used for a wide variety of very different and often contrasting purposes and, at

the same time, how it has been optimized for some more than others. I specifically noticed more space optimization around what can interface with constituents or certain types of meetings; much less so for the day-to-day work of staff.

So, yeah, I agree with you, as well; there is a lot of opportunity, particularly in the staff portions of your offices, for modifications and in the public assembly spaces as well.

Mr. Phillips. Thank you.

Mr. Wand.

Mr. Wand. One thing that struck me was the individual offices and how you set that up.

The Chairman. Mr. Cleaver, you got unmuted there for a second.

Go ahead, Mr. Wand.

Mr. Wand. I noticed that your office is very different than Vice Chair Timmons' office and Chairman Kilmer's office that I just saw a stark contrast between those --

Mr. Phillips. Whose was the nicest?

Mr. Wand. I felt more at home in your office.

And I will say that the comparison I was making while I was walking in was the office buildings in the Capitol are the size of an airport. They are the size of conference centers, and everybody understands how to traverse and navigate through an airport because you can't miss the signage. There are these universal icons that are available.

These long hallways when you are in the tunnel: Are you going towards Rayburn? Where are you going, right? That was difficult to understand. And I will say that the directory was hard to read; font was challenging. And it was difficult to understand the key on -- you know, was this Rayburn? Is this -- what office building do I need to go to find Mr. Phillip's office?

Mr. Phillips. As I have been listening, wayfinding is terribly important to all of us,



and we all get lost. I suspect that part of the dynamic right now is also as a security element. If the January 6th insurgents knew exactly where they were going, it may have been actually challenging for this institution. From a security perspective, sometimes you don't want to make it easy to find the Speaker's Office or this or that person. We have to balance that here. It is complicated.

But, with that said, based on your experience, Mr. Wand, at the Mall of America, which I can tell you as someone who has navigated it, it is remarkably stress free for a building its size with its plethora of institutions within. It is so easy. It is almost antithetical to right here.

How do you recommend we begin that process to -- I know you outlined some of it how you did it, but for this institution specifically, where would we start?

Mr. Wand. Yeah. I absolutely acknowledge the challenges of security. They are not unlike our own. A building of our size with one of the largest private police forces in the country, it was something that was extremely important to us. Modern technology nowadays allows you to remove areas that you don't want on a map to make them guest-friendly and to make them easy to read.

There are maps, as you guys know already, in -- by the elevators. And I would say looking at those from a more modern look and feel would be really, really, I think, helpful.

There are modern icons, and I would say universal icons for "you are here." I will say it took me about 3 or 4 minutes to find out where I was because I couldn't find the little red triangle on the map. So I would say, you know, be creative around what you do want to see. And then be aware and really just put those into two buckets: This is not accessible to the public. We don't want people to see this. I don't think I would recommend you would have a wayfinding to the Speaker's Office or to any of your offices.

But thinking a little bit about perpendicular signage in the hallway right here so that I know that I am in the right direction for the budget office, the budget room, would be really helpful.

Mr. Phillips. Great. Thank you. I yield back.

The Chairman. It is really tricky. I have to say, you know, you mentioned the 6th of January. The thing that among many things that freaked me out that day was I didn't know how to get out of the building. My second day in the Rayburn building, and I had no idea like where the exit was. The wayfinding is the pits, right?

Mr. Timmons.

Mr. Timmons. On the subject of trying to find where you are going, how to get there, I think technology has a big component. But I have actually thought a lot about just color coding quadrants. I know it is kind of weird. But when you are in Rayburn, one, you don't know where you are. I literally have to pull my phone out to figure out to find my friends. I am here. This is where I am relative to everything else. If we color-coded quadrants to where those red, yellow, blue, green, and you know that when you are at a corner, you can see two colors. You are like, all right, well, I know that it is over there.

So I don't know, I just think there are some basic things that we could do. The other thing is I talked earlier about Cannon is here, and then Longworth goes down. Rayburn goes down. It is incredibly challenging to understand the different numbers, letters, I mean, it is just wild. And I have been here for 3 years. I promise you I could not get to his office the most efficient way possible. I just know that.

So what are your thoughts -- technology is definitely a component to help fix this, but should we just kind of take a fresh look at -- I drew it. I mean, when you think about it, it is literally on a hill. There are different levels. Oh, and then ceiling heights are the

another one. Here we have 18 to 24 foot ceilings here, and you go to Longworth, there is 10. So it is just -- everything is not connected.

What are your thoughts on that?

Mr. Wand. I think back to basics, right? I think you hit the nail on the head, whether it is color-coding, whether it is a numerical system that makes more sense. So, at Mall of America, we have addresses, right? West 234, clearly is on the west side, second level, No. 34. That makes sense to a lot of people.

And I will say that we have a foundational system just like you have, and those were our anchor stores, right? So everyone knows where Macy's is, where Nordstrom is, where the entrance to L.L. Bean and in the northeast court where Sears used to be. Those are the foundations that we have. We are lucky in the fact that we are an octagon, right? We are pretty symmetrical. You can fold us on top of each other. So, if you walk around in a circle, you will eventually end up where you started.

Not very similar here. But I would say absolutely think about the basics: red, yellow, green, something like that would really be helpful for the guests to understand, okay, if I am in the yellow area and I know I need to go to the green area, what is the simplest way to get there? And then, along the way, just simple signage, right, that says "yellow this way" that is right in your face. It would be really, really simple without technology.

Ms. Irwin. Essentially, it is design. It is the psychology of design and what you perceive. And if you have a hierarchy and a level of things that indicate where you should go, you understand that the cafeteria in big letters is around the corner. And it is colored green because it is nutritious food that is available and is promoted, and everybody should go in that direction. And that is your anchor store. You know, so there is a lot that just goes into subconscious psychology in providing this hierarchy of

spaces where people know where to go based on the signage and the font size and what it means.

Mr. Timmons. Sure. Thank you.

One last question, but before I do, Mr. Ossman, I just want to say thank you to Etsy for the work that you were doing practicing what you preach in regards to Ukraine. I just want to point out that you all canceled the current balance of the debts. You buy [inaudible] a million dollars. You are matching charitable contributions through relief efforts to employees, \$750 -- up to \$750 in deactivated Russian-based sellers. You know, it is easy to forget that we are so safe in this country, and there are terrible challenges in other countries. I just appreciate your effort.

My last question is about outdoor space. We talked about, you know, I have an indoor -- I have a courtyard view here, and I do think there is a huge opportunity. I think, at the end of this renovation, there is going to be incredible green space and trees and all that stuff. And then you go over to Rayburn. They do have a courtyard as well. I do think we could probably do a little more there.

And then there are outdoor spaces as well, both south of the House Office Buildings and then around the Capitol. I mean, I think we all agree we need to do more to incorporate that. In D.C. 8 months out of the year, it is probably possible to go outside.

What are some areas that you have seen, maybe at Mall of America or in other places in the country or world, that you think we should try to emulate that is doing this really well.

Ms. Irwin. Well, certainly, there are rooftop, you know, green roofs that are able for people to go to. The Library of Congress buildings has one, I believe. Thurgood Marshall has an enclosed atrium with a large bamboo grove that has seating. That is a

few steps away from here. Clearly, it has been done. It is on the campus. You have those examples.

Voice. Renovated hotel space?

Ms. Irwin. I have not seen the hoteling space that Mr. Blanton described.

Mr. Wand. At Mall of America, we have accommodating, I would say, lighting, just from natural lighting with the skylights, which is really, really helpful. I will say that I wished there was more outdoor seating. That is very complex in our building. There is only really one location, which is the JW Marriott's restaurant that has outdoor seating. And I know there was comments earlier -- I remember one about a restaurant. So just thinking about that and outdoor seating kind of creates that team atmosphere for smaller meetings or larger meetings. We, as our team went out there and sat and had a dinner together, and that is really important.

Voice. [Inaudible]

Mr. Wand. Yeah. I was about to say, I think you are being a little liberal there.

Mr. Ossman. I can add that Etsy incorporates outdoor space through many of our offices. Our Brooklyn headquarters has three outdoor spaces, a rooftop and two terraces. They are very much enjoyed by employees. People will hop out there for a quick private phone call. There are team celebrations on the rooftop. It is also a place to display our values. We have a large solar array that helps power the building. There are local plants and greenery. They are highly enjoyed places and are valuable from an employee-recruiting-and-retention standpoint.

The Chairman. I think it is really interesting stuff. And I think it is worth -- part of the reason we are looking at this is, is the mission of this committee is to make Congress work better for the American people. So, as we think about these space issues, a lot of it is discussion around like, how do you have a more functional work space

where people can work efficiently and effectively and work on behalf of the American people? But that is why we are talking about this stuff.

So you mentioned just the differences you saw in the three offices that you visited. You know, what is unique about this place is there is some shared space, the committee rooms and whatnot, but by and large, we are like 435 independent contractors. And what our expertise is in is not this, right? So I think about when you are a new Member coming in, you get, you know, Longworth 1420, and they say, so what kind of furniture do you want, and how do you want it laid out? And you have got folks who maybe have a background in policy or political science making space decisions that, frankly, they don't know anything about, right? So I guess I share that dynamic to ask your advice, right?

How -- are there -- because we have shared space, which we have talked some about, but then we have these individual offices. Are there best practices this type of dynamic where you have got folks coming into a workplace without the expertise to determine what a good layout is or what proper -- when you talked about things that might suppress noise and might enable a more collaborative workplace.

So, if you were us, if you were our committee, would you make a recommendation saying the Architect of the Capitol or somebody ought to come up with three or four or five -- sort of, here are some options that you may want to think about, right, that you may want to optimize around for a modern, efficient workplace? Does that question make sense?

Ms. Irwin. Yes. I missed the last little bit of that, but I just wanted to say that, you know, pressing upon the AOC to say let's give the new Members coming in a tour of some good workspace environments that allow different modes of working. There are ways -- from the three offices I saw the other day, you know, two of them had folks there,

you know, in every single seat. And one of them, they said that they were in-person all the time. And then your office, there is telework, and it is very flexible. So each individual office, like you said, has a culture and a way of work, but also there is a need to educate folks that there are other ways to do things, and education is a big part of this.

So I think just walking through a couple offices that have changed, or the offices that Mr. Blanton spoke about in Thurgood Marshall, saying: Here is the setup. This is how we do our work in our business day-to-day. Does this work for you, and how the Member likes to do their business? Are they just on videoconference all the time, or do they really want that person-to-person, in-person experience sitting at a table across from each other, but they need a quiet space to do it? I think just education from the get-go is what is needed when you come in.

The Chairman. Anyone else want to swing at that pinch?

Mr. Ossman. Yeah. One of the things that struck me as I was kind of understanding the dynamic going from office to office and also your individual teams' kind of cultures and styles was there is almost a need for templates for them, right? Like there are a few different designs that could optimize for different ways of working. And for folks who are not experts in this who could come in and just take a template and roll it out in their office, I think it could be very beneficial.

The other thing that comes to mind as I was doing a very informal, nonscientific survey questioning some of the staff members on their feelings about cubicles. And I was shocked; almost everyone actually liked their cubicles. I don't think we could recruit a single employee in tech if we had cubicles. They are just simply not the standard.

And so what that said to me is people don't know what they don't know either. And it would be helpful to give people exposure to other alternatives. I think open-floor

seating and no partitions between desks, you know, no cubicles could be great options for optimizing your space, letting in more light, creating a more balanced environment, but they might not be desired until people have been exposed to that.

The Chairman. I think that is really important. It is really hard to, you know, to make change when you don't know what that looks like, right? One of the things I -- one of my main takeaways in the work of this committee is, if you want things to work differently, do things differently, right?

Mr. Wand. Yeah. And I would just add, I use the analogy of Lego's; if there were a lot of different ways you could maybe put together office space. I will say, from our experience at Mall of America, we were in the basement. We called it the dungeon. There was no natural light, obviously. We were in very small cubicles. Now, we are in work pods, and I think we very carefully designed that the only people that have offices are those that are executives. If you are a director, if you are a senior manager, you work in a pod. It allows for collaboration. And there was some consternation there, some concerns about that, and I wouldn't go back. It hammers to the point of you don't know what you don't know until you experience it. But also having the flexibility so that you each design your offices for the type of work and the type of folks you hire to help you do your jobs.

The Chairman. The other thing I just want to ask about is there is -- there are a number of constraints that we deal with in this environment, right? Security being one; historic preservation being another; even thinking about reconfiguring hearing rooms. I didn't realize that there is, you know, historic preservation around the protection of the dais, like, okay. Cost, right, because we have got to be efficient with the taxpayers' resources. And there is just not a lot of flexible space, right?

There is 435 independent contractors, plus the folks who represent the territories.



And then, you know, it is not like we have got empty offices sitting around, right? So you heard that from the Architect of the Capitol when we are like, well, could we have some hoteling space or could there be bipartisan workspace? I think the reaction is, sure, but where, right?

So do you have advice to us on how to think about, because we want to make recommendations to improve the functionality of this place, how to do that in a way that is conscious of some of those constraints?

Ms. Irwin. Certainly. I think big picture-wise, it is having a holistic view of what can improve the physical space, as well as the education of the occupants about what is historic or what spaces are in use or are underused or can be used. And then to have things that are set in that are policies that are, we promote fitness so that you can go to the O'Neill Building; it is encouraged to get the exercise, use the stairs, other ways to get around the House Office Buildings.

So I think a big picture view -- and there are ways to measure this. There are standards in place that other agencies and corporations are adopting to measure these things. You can do a checklist to make sure your physical space is doing X, Y, and Z, and that you are educating your occupants, and that you have things in place that you are supporting new mothers, providing them refrigeration, sinks, a comfortable chair, and a quiet place. So there are things that can be instilled across the board.

But for cost, you know, that is words. That is things written up. That is not expensive movement of partition walls or anything like that. The small scale, the physical space, sit-to-stand desks improve ergonomics, improve the comfort of somebody who is in their seat from 7:30 in the morning until 8:30 at night, having that flexibility, providing the telework options.

So different ways of seating. You know, other furniture solutions, having the

phone booth pods where you can have a comfortable, quiet place to go. Some of the telephone booths, the historic ones, are being used for that purpose. Old broom closets are being transferred and converted into telephone private rooms where you can take a cell phone call. So there are, you know, modest things like that.

You know, improving the acoustics on the hard plaster walls that aren't going to move. Well, you can hang acoustical panels from walls and ceilings in a way that is reversible so it won't damage features of the space. Providing a sound masking system, you know, that is not going to harm any space. So I think there are ways to do a lot of things, incremental moves.

Even in the cafeteria, it is so noisy and busy in there. But there are furniture solutions that can create a little acoustical shell, if you will, for a couple of people to sit down, that has acoustical padding around it and provides some level of privacy. It is not soundproof, but it is something that provides a place for people to go and they have that privacy that they need.

Mr. Ossman. On the cost-effective piece, I would just emphasize that sustainable design and operational practices can be a cost benefit. Things like LED light fixtures, low-flow water fixtures, reuse of materials. During the pandemic, Etsy retrofitted all of its workstations from one standard height to sit-to-stand, and we used the actual same desktop surfaces to do that. So there are ways to make improvements while reusing or better using what you have.

I agree with many of the recommendations that you mentioned, as well we are a big fan of phone booths. It does allow for quick, private calls. They don't need to be bookable so that resolves the issue around the booking system of meeting rooms that you mentioned.

But also look more into use of common spaces, hallways, or elevator lobby areas

for informal gatherings. Having flexible furniture, like couches and sofas, where people can just hop in, again, without reserving and have a quick meeting. Etsy's a big fan of walking meetings. Many people will get outside the building, go for a walk around the neighborhood. Here, you don't even need to leave the complex. You could stay underground the whole time. But it can be great for relationship building and informal discussions, not to mention also healthy for people.

The Chairman. I have been here 10 years. I don't think I have had a meeting any place other than Cannon, Longworth, or Rayburn. You mentioned the O'Neill building. I have heard of that, but I don't think I have been in it. I don't know that I have been in the Marshall Building. So maybe we need to think bigger about the space that we have.

The other thing, we have space that is chronically underutilized. You mentioned in your testimony committee hearing rooms when there is not a hearing going on. There are other spaces where -- one of the problems that we have is the reservation system is broken. So what happens is people kind of hoard the space, you know, and -- or they book space whether or not they need it because they want to make sure they have it. They do need it, right?

So you all work in environments where the challenges we are facing can't be unique. So I am going to airdrop you onto our committee. What ought we recommend to fix some of that, the issue around underutilized space? Like I was a management consultant 20 years ago. We had a pretty easy way of booking empty office spaces and conference rooms, and things like that. And I came here, and I am like it has got to be easier than this, right?

Mr. Wand. I will say that we use Outlook, and we use reservations for rooms. Those rooms are -- there are rules behind it. So, for example, you can't schedule

something for longer than 6 months of reoccurring for that exact reason: Oh, I might need it in a year.

There are rules around approvals, right? So there are certain rooms that I can book, but then an approval goes to, say, the HR director for their conference room.

So I think, you know, being that -- I asked some of the questions yesterday, that you guys are using Outlook. Some of that might be really easy to implement with some thought, right, and some process for how that should work. That is built in, right, for probably not a lot of cost versus a homegrown system. It might work a lit bit better and might be a little more user friendly as well. You have to weigh those advantages.

Ms. Irwin. And I think there are comments about how this is like an airport; it is like a convention center. If you go to conference at a hotel, there are monitors up that tell you what the hearings are gonna -- could be, what the hearings are, what is on the schedule so they know these big rooms, that they are not in use the last Friday of every month or something, or there is a gap of, you know, 3 hours, and somebody can come in and use it for an impromptu meeting.

Mr. Wand. And I will add there, we played around with some technology where the room will know if, say, you are booked for an hour but you leave after 15 minutes, it will become available for another person to book, say, for the next 45 minutes. So some of those things are out there. They are not terribly expensive. It is a battery-operated Bluetooth, essentially. Motion detectors tied into applications that can understand there are people in the room.

Mr. Ossman. We use a combination of things for meeting rooms. Like I said, there are some meeting rooms, phone booths in particular, that are unbookable. The nature of a phone call is you don't know when it is going to happen; you need to hop in somewhere. And then, beyond that, the vast majority of our rooms are booked through

Google Calendar. Everyone has equal access. We indicate what types of technology are available in each room so people know what they are booking and book a room that serves a purpose they need.

And, lastly, our largest most technologically advanced and also reconfigurable rooms are centrally booked. So we have a single gatekeeper that allows people to prioritize. I would say it is really important everyone has the same access to whatever systems that you are using.

Mr. Phillips. I often ask if people can wave their magic wand and now we have Mr. Wand in front of us.

I have long thought that we could create an app, this whole complex, that would accommodate a lot of these things we are talking about. You can make reservations, wayfinding.

I was just looking at the Mall of America app. I don't have it. But is there a portion of that app that allows you to wayfind, that you could type in a restaurant or a store and it will actually help you navigate?

Mr. Wand. Yeah. So, going back to 2015, part of the WiFi project was implementing our first version of our mobile app. We had Bluetooth beacons installed along with the wireless access points that allowed for blue dot. It was really accurate, but the management of that was -- there was a lot of overhead. In a building of our size that is constantly changing, it was really hard to keep up-to-date of paths and accuracy of the blue dot.

Now, essentially what we did was, when we put our directories in, we realized that is what really people need. We can't try and recreate and be Google, right? We don't have the funds to be Google Maps or Apple Maps, but what we can do is, you know, look at common best practices for mapping. And so, in our app, it is: Where are you

now, and where would you like to go?

Simple, goal-oriented, and it draws a line. You can actually text on our directories. You can actually text to your phone the route, so you obviously have to leave the directory to go to the Apple Store. So, if the Apple Store is on the other side of the mall, and you need to go another directory, certainly there are opportunities. But a lot of people will text that route to their phone.

Applications today are very similar to the mobile websites that are out there. So I think I would challenge the thought process around, do I need a mobile app, or do I just need a more friendly mobile website? But certainly it comes down to, you know, what the Sergeant at Arms will allow in terms of maps that are publicly available. But there are a lot of things that we do.

We have an internal employee app that allows you to chat individually with your supervisor. We have apps that allow you to see deals for all the tenants, post job opportunities. It has really changed the way we function as an office, especially during COVID. And really the goal there, again, not complicated: the right information at the right time.

Mr. Phillips. Well, thank you all very much. I am grateful, and very inspirational. Hopefully when you come back in 50, 60 years, you will see some changes.

The Chairman. I really like the idea of also just, you know, once the building openings back up for visitors broadly, I think it would be cool if you are walking down the hall, if there was something on the outside of the committee rooms saying there is a committee meeting happening on this subject right now. This is the people's house, right? There is no screen when you come in that says: If you are here to visit your Member of Congress, when you are done, these are the hearings that are happening if

you want to go watch, right? I don't know. I feel like my family would enjoy doing that.

Mr. Phillips. We could do a field trip to Bloomington. I would be happy to host -- and to Brooklyn.

Mr. Wand. Absolutely. You are all more than welcome to come to Mall of America. We will give you guys the tour.

The Chairman. I really appreciated you bringing your expertise to our committee and again want to acknowledge Mr. Phillips and Mr. Davis for their leadership on this issue.

Before we wrap, I also just want to note some sad news. Our committee has done -- has really made a point of trying to get our committee together and have meals on occasion and try to do some of the things that need to happen more in this place. Earlier this year, we had dinner with two former Members and broke bread and listened to them talk about ways that we might be able to fix some of what is broken in this place. And one of the former Members who met with us was Vic Fazio, who unfortunately passed away earlier this week. And I just want to offer condolences to his family. He was definitely a steward of this institution. He cared a lot about making Congress work better. I want to offer condolences to his family. He will be missed.

Again, I want to thank our witnesses for their testimony. I also want to thank our committee members for their participation. We had a number of members who popped in and off of the screen. So, hopefully, they got to enjoy your expertise.

I also just want to thank our committee staff. It is hard to put together hearings like this, and they do a terrific job. So I just want to acknowledge their great work.

And now the official stuff. Without objection, all members will have 5 legislative days within which to submit additional written questions for the witnesses to the chair,

which will be forwarded to the witnesses for their response. I ask our witnesses to please respond as promptly as you are able.

Without objection, all members will have 5 legislative days within which to submit extraneous materials to the chair for inclusion in our record.

With that, this hearing adjourned. Thanks, everybody.

[Whereupon, at 10:42 a.m., the committee was adjourned.]